

seems to *confer* something on the cause; but as a disciple, he must surrender to feel littleness, humility, and submission. Self-importance might find more to gratify it in becoming the *patron* of a beggar, than the *servant* of a potentate. Addison was, moreover, very unfortunate, for anything like justice to genuine Christianity, in the class of persons with whom he associated, and among whom he did not hold his pre-eminence by any such imperial tenure? as could make him careless of the policy of pleasing them by a general conformity of sentiment. One can imagine with what a perfect storm of ridicule he would have been greeted, on entering one of his celebrated coffee-houses of wits on the day after he should have published in the *Spectator* a paper, for instance, on the necessity of being devoted to the service of Jesus Christ. The friendship of the world ought to be a "pearl of great price," for its cost is very serious.

The powerful and lofty spirit of Johnson was far more capable of scorning the ridicule, and defying the opposition, of wits and worldlings. And yet his social life must have been greatly unfavourable to a deep and simple consideration of Christian truth, and the cultivation of Christian sentiment. Might not even his imposing and unchallenged ascendancy itself betray him to admit, insensibly, an injurious influence on his mind? He associated with men of whom many were very learned, some extremely able, but comparatively few made any decided profession of piety; and perhaps a considerable number were such as would in other society have shown a strong propensity to irreligion. This however dared not to appear undisguisedly in Johnson's presence; and it is impossible not to revere the strength and noble severity that made it so cautious. But this constrained abstinence from overt irreligion had the effect of preventing the repugnance of his judgment and religious feelings to the frequent society of men from whom he would have recoiled, if the real temper of their minds, in regard to the most important subjects, had been unreservedly forced on his view. Decorum toward religion being preserved, he would take no rigorously judicial account of the internal character of those who brought so finely into play his mental powers and resources, in conversations on literature, moral philosophy, and general intelligence; and who could enrich every matter of social argument by their learning, their genius,